

**Finding of No Significant Impact
for
Bureau of Land Management Land Use Plan Amendment
for Wildland Fire and Fuels Management
Environmental Assessment
No. AK-313-04-EA-001**

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) analyzed a proposal to amend all of Alaska's existing Resource Management Plans (RMP), Management Framework Plans (MFP), and the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska Integrated Activity Plans (IAP) to update direction for wildland fire and fuels management. The amendment and planning analysis also includes BLM-managed lands not covered under existing plans and will be applicable to BLM-managed lands statewide. It identifies land use and resource objectives, wildland fire suppression options, and fuels (vegetation) management activities that achieve those objectives. Wildland fire and fuels management direction at the first tier of land use planning for BLM-Alaska will comply with the National Fire Plan and 2001 Review and Update of the 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy. Public input, specialist input, and existing Alaska-specific fire management decisions and policy were used to develop the alternatives. The alternatives are described and analyzed in the attached Environmental Assessment (EA).

Rationale for Finding No Significant Impact

Both beneficial and adverse effects have been considered in Chapter 3 of the EA. The potential adverse effects would be limited to acceptable levels by Standard Operating Procedures, Restrictions and Constraints. Those have been specified in Chapter 2, Sections 2.3.3 and 2.5.5. The beneficial effects of allowing wildland fire to function in its natural role as an important component of the boreal forest and arctic tundra ecosystems and the detrimental effects of fire management activities including suppression efforts and the complete exclusion of wildland fire are examined. Tempering the natural role of fire in the environment to protect human life and health, private property, developments, and certain valued natural and cultural resources was considered. Appropriate fuels treatment methods for use in Alaska are identified as viable management tools. Firefighter and public safety are emphasized as the highest priority in all fire and fuels management activities. The Amendment continues interagency consultation, coordination, and cooperation. The management option standards defined in Chapter 2, Section 2.3, Management in Common, were implemented by previous efforts of the Alaskan interagency wildland fire community to provide for a consistent approach to wildland fire and cost-effective management of the fire suppression program. The Amendment synthesizes BLM-specific program elements into each management option classification.

The proposed Amendment requires site-specific fuel treatment project plans with appropriate analyses. It is consistent with state and federal laws and current federal and BLM wildland fire management policies. Based on the effects disclosed in the EA and additional documentation in the appendices, there are no significant adverse cumulative impacts.

Determination

On the basis of the information contained in the attached Environmental Assessment and all other information available to me, it is my determination that the proposed amendment will have no significant effect on the quality of the human environment. Therefore, in accordance with Section 102 (2) (C) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, an Environmental Impact Statement is unnecessary and will not be prepared.


Henri Bisson, State Director, Alaska

Acting

7-06-04
Date